

Study Guide



Chapter 30, Section 1

For use with textbook pages 892–895

THE UNITED STATES FOCUSES ON VIETNAM

KEY TERMS AND NAMES

Ho Chi Minh Vietnam leader of the nationalism movement (page 893)

domino theory the belief that if Vietnam fell to communism, so would the other Southeast Asian nations (page 894)

guerrillas irregular troops who usually blend into the civilian population and are often difficult for regular armies to fight (page 894)

Dien Bien Phu the location of the battle that forced France to withdraw from Indochina (page 894)

Ngo Dinh Diem the leader of the government of South Vietnam (page 895)

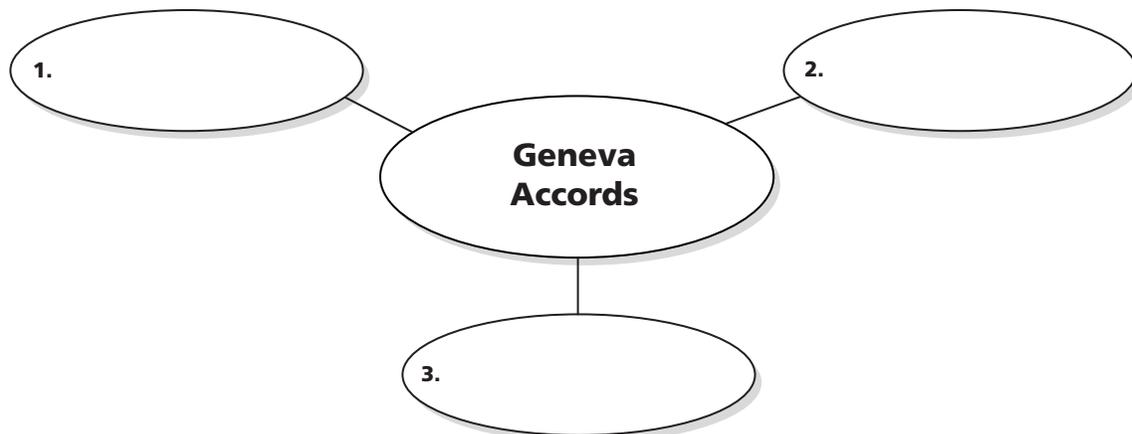
DRAWING FROM EXPERIENCE

Where is Vietnam located? What do you know about the country? From where did your information about the nation come?

In this section, you will learn about the nationalist movement in Vietnam. You will also learn why the United States became involved in Vietnam.

ORGANIZING YOUR THOUGHTS

Use the diagram below to help you take notes. The Geneva Accords negotiated the end of the conflict between France and Vietnam. List the results of the negotiations in the diagram.



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READ TO LEARN

- **Early American Involvement in Vietnam** (page 892)

Vietnam had often been ruled by foreign powers. China controlled it off and on for hundreds of years. From the late 1800s until World War II, France ruled Vietnam and neighboring Laos and Cambodia. This region became known as French Indochina. Japan took power in Vietnam during World War II.

By the early 1900s, nationalism spread through Vietnam. Several political parties pushed for independence from France. One of the leaders of the movement was **Ho Chi Minh**. In 1930 he helped start the Indochinese Communist Party and worked to overthrow French rule. In 1941, after Japan had taken control of Vietnam, Ho organized a nationalist group called the Vietminh. The group's goal was to get rid of the Japanese forces. The United States sent military aid to the Vietminh.

When Japan was defeated in August 1945, it gave up control of Indochina. Ho announced that Vietnam was an independent nation. France, however, did not want to see Vietnam independent. It wanted to regain its colonial empire in Southeast Asia. France sent troops to Vietnam in 1946 and drove the Vietminh's forces into hiding in the countryside. By 1949 France had set up a new government in Vietnam. The Vietminh fought against the French and slowly increased their control over large areas of the countryside. As fighting increased, France asked the United States for help.

The request put the United States in a difficult position. The United States had opposed colonialism. It urged the Dutch to give up their holdings in Indonesia. It supported the British decision to grant India independence. However, the conflict over Vietnam also included the issue of communism. The United States did not think that France should control Vietnam. At the same time, it did not want Vietnam to be Communist.

President Truman decided to help France for two reasons: the fall of China to communism and the Korean War. President Eisenhower continued to support the French against the Vietminh. Eisenhower defended the U.S. policy in Vietnam by stressing the **domino theory**. This was a belief that if Vietnam fell to communism, the other Southeast Asian nations would also.

4. How did President Eisenhower defend the U.S. policy in Vietnam?

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- **The Vietminh Drive Out the French** *(page 894)*

The Vietminh military tactics frustrated the French. The Vietminh used the tactics of **guerrillas**, or irregular troops who usually blend into the civilian population and are often difficult for regular armies to fight.

In 1954 French troops occupied the Vietnamese town of **Dien Bien Phu**. They hoped to interfere with the Vietminh's supply lines. Soon after, a large Vietminh force surrounded the town and began bombarding it. On May 7, 1954, the French forces at Dien Bien Phu fell to the Vietminh. The French decided to withdraw from Indochina.

Negotiations to end the conflict took place in Geneva, Switzerland. The Geneva Accords temporarily divided Vietnam into North Vietnam and South Vietnam. Ho Chi Minh and the Vietminh controlled North Vietnam. A pro-Western regime controlled South Vietnam. Elections were to be held in 1956 to reunite the country under a single government.

The United States stepped in to support the new government in South Vietnam. Its leader was **Ngo Dinh Diem**, who was anti-Communist. When the time came to hold elections in 1956, Diem refused. Eisenhower supported Diem, and the United States increased military and economic aid to South Vietnam. Tensions between the North and South increased.

5. What was the significance of the battle of Dien Bien Phu?
